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To: Karen Tvedt, Early Learning Council
From: GMMB
Date: February 22, 2006
Re: Early learning naming

During a recent series of focus groups on early learning message development we tested several potential umbrella names for an early learning initiative in Washington state. The Gates Foundation, Talaris and Maria Vera attended some of these sessions. The focus groups were conducted in the Puget Sound, Spokane and Tri-Cities areas with lower and middle-income parents, as well as opinion leaders. Groups of Latino parents were conducted in Spanish in the Tri-Cities.

The names were presented in a way that allowed for participants in the groups to discuss them, work with them and offer alternatives. They had the opportunity to not only comment on them, but improve upon them. One clear winner emerged, while several other names were well-received.

1st Tier:

Thrive by 5

Thrive by 5 was far and away the consensus choice of both parents and opinion leaders. Participants liked the name because it is “catchy,” easy to understand, clearly communicates what the initiative is about, and clearly defines the age group the initiative is focused on. They liked the word “thrive” because it has energy and connotes not only school readiness in the academic sense but everything else that goes into it – from healthiness to emotional and social development. This name also appears to have cultural crossover appeal as it rose to the top in Spanish-language groups as well where it was tested as “Triunfa a los cinco.”

2nd Tier:

Seeds of Success
Right Start
Ready Set Learn

All three of these names were well-received by participants, though less well than *Thrive by 5*. Participants liked *Seeds of Success* because it exemplifies what is important about 0-5 and it was memorable. They also liked the word “success.” *Right Start* was liked because of its similarity to *Head Start*, yet a few objected to the word “right” – because it implied that another way was “wrong.” *Ready Set Learn* had significant support in Spokane, but did less well in Western Washington.

3rd Tier:

Washington Early Learning
Washington's Promise

These names had pockets of support, but also elicited some negative comments. Overall, they were less well-received than the others. Several people liked the concept of a promise to our

children, the implied accountability and the double-meaning of the word “promise.” Several others however, objected to the name because it sounded “political” and because the Constitutional promise really applies to K-12.

4th Tier:

Day One: Born to Learn
Born to Learn Washington
First Teachers

While a couple participants liked *First Teachers*, the other two – *Day One* and *Born to Learn Washington* – garnered no expressions of support. These names were singled out for criticism more than any others. People viewed the idea of learning at “day one” or birth as too much pressure – at day one you are still in the hospital and just trying to recover. All three names also confused many participants.